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Official Records

Disarmament Commission

303rd meeting

Monday, 29 March 2010, 10.29 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Zinsou ..... (Benin)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): I declare open the 2010 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

I would like to thank the members of the Commission for having elected me, as well as for the trust they have placed in me to preside over this session.

Before we turn to the first matter before us, allow me, on behalf of all the members of the Commission, to pay tribute to the enlightened leadership of Mr. Shaaban Shaaban, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, whose staff is responsible for providing conference services to the Disarmament Commission.

I would especially like to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who is seated beside me and whose Office provides technical support to the Commission's work. Without further ado, I give him the floor so that he can share with us his observations with regard to the results expected from the Commission's work.

Mr. Duarte: I am honoured to address the Disarmament Commission as it commences its 2010 substantive session. At the outset, I wish to commend its departing Chairman, Ambassador Andrzej Towpik, for his competent stewardship of the work of the Commission last year. I also wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over this session. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to assist you, the other members of the Bureau and all delegations in the work throughout this session.

The Commission is beginning its work this year in an environment quite different from that which existed in past years. A fresh, affirmative spirit of multilateralism has been rekindled in disarmament and non-proliferation deliberations in many arenas. We hear global nuclear disarmament less and less relegated to the vague status of an ultimate goal and more and more cited as an imperative for national and collective action — even better, as an imperative that has even been recognized by States possessing such weapons and, as we all know, at the highest levels.

We are also witnessing a new recognition throughout the world of the need to strengthen the rule of law in many disarmament areas. This recognition is apparent in the ongoing efforts to negotiate new treaties concerning the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons; to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force; to commence negotiations on a fissile material treaty; to expand membership in treaties that outlaw inhumane weapons, landmines and cluster munitions; to develop legal restraints on conventional arms exports; and to strengthen compliance with all these treaties, while exploring the potential negotiation of new legal instruments in such areas as space weapons and, one day perhaps, missiles.

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Last year, we also witnessed the entry into force of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Central Asia and Africa, though work remains to be done to achieve ratifications of all their relevant protocols.

However, I do not wish to minimize the challenges ahead to achieving all the many goals incorporated under the great umbrella of general and complete disarmament, or the hard work that will lie ahead in forging consensus on the three issues on the agenda of the Commission, concerning nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, a new disarmament decade, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

These issues are before this Commission not because they are easy, but because they are difficult and important to pursue in this unique forum, which allows for in-depth deliberation on a small number of key substantive issues. That is the very raison d'être of the Disarmament Commission. That is its main function as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and a primary component of the wider United Nations disarmament machinery.

The delegations in attendance today are well aware that it has now been 11 years since the Disarmament Commission was able to reach a consensus on key substantive issues on its agenda. In the past, the greatest obstacles to progress were — as they have always been in this field — a pervasive climate of mistrust, mutual suspicion, and lack of confidence that stated goals were being pursued through concrete actions. Yet, just as developments outside the United Nations have helped to improve this climate — and here I am referring to the recently announced progress in strategic arms negotiations, and new disarmament initiatives from Member States and civil society — so, too, has the time come for the United Nations institutions to make their own new contributions to this encouraging trend.

A positive outcome from this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission would help in revitalizing a truly multilateral approach to dealing with the great global challenges in the field of disarmament as we travel our common road together over the months and years to come. I therefore wish all delegations well in their deliberations and reaffirm the commitment of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to assist them, to the best of our ability, in reaching our common destination.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his valuable contribution to our work and for having taken part in the opening of the 2010 session of the Disarmament Commission. His presence is a great honour for the Commission and will help galvanize its members to carry out the delicate work entrusted to them.

I should also like to thank all the Secretariat staff who have contributed to the preparations for this session.

In recent years, the Disarmament Commission has made considerable efforts to narrow the divide between Member States on the crucial items on its agenda as they seek multilateral solutions to the challenges facing humanity in the area of international peace and security. This is an invaluable contribution to the cause of peace, even if the Commission, as the High Representative pointed out, has been unable to formulate consensus recommendations on the path to be followed and means to implemented in promoting the common objectives of humankind in this area.

The Commission has served as a crucible for frank exchange and constructive dialogue among Member States in a very complex context. In this respect, we can only welcome the positive developments of recent months. They have opened up new prospects for substantial progress in the pursuit of the objective of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, from nuclear weapons to small arms and light weapons.

We can only welcome the leadership that has been shown by the major nuclear Powers in easing tensions in the international context and in nurturing the nascent cooperative approach to the search for solutions to the challenges that have been identified. The debate under way on the possibility of a world free of nuclear weapons has penetrated decision-making spheres on a number of levels. It has great potential as a fundamental game-changer in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The international community should spare no effort to realize this potential.

We note with genuine satisfaction the prospect of the imminent signing of an agreement on the reduction

of stockpiles of nuclear weapons. It is clear that the conclusion of such an agreement would be a significant step towards general and complete disarmament. It could create a new context that could facilitate discussions on other aspects of nuclear disarmament, including non-proliferation and cooperation in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and thus help to restore the consensus on which the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is based.

It is now 20 years since the cold war came to an end. It is incomprehensible that the material threat of the use of nuclear weapons is just as high today as it was in the past. It is to be hoped that Member States will make good use of the new opportunities provided by the significant international meetings planned for 2010, namely, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the first session of the Preparatory Committee on an arms trade treaty, to cite but a few.

It is clear that the progress to be made at those meetings will have a positive impact on improving the current international environment and will help to bring military expenditures under the necessary control. It is a fact that the international community is facing serious difficulties in keeping its commitments to development. Similarly, the major challenges posed by climate change require that vast resources be mobilized in order to ward off the threats posed by humankind and the changing environment. In the light of such statements, the level that military spending has reached is problematic.

In the current circumstances, the least we can expect from this session of the Disarmament Commission is that it deliberate in a frank atmosphere of mutual understanding so as to forge a consensus view of the issues before it.

I urge Member States to make the most of the new momentum in disarmament affairs. We should strive within the established working groups that have been ready since last year to create the best conditions in order to facilitate a positive conclusion of the current three-year cycle. I welcome the efforts made by the chairmen of the working groups along those lines. They will pursue those efforts with those present here over the next three weeks.

To conclude, I reiterate our deep appreciation to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management for its valuable assistance and support in preparing for this session.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): Members of the Commission will recall that, at our organizational session on 15 March, the Commission formally adopted the provisional agenda, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.63. At this meeting, therefore, the Commission shall not take any action on this issue. May I take it that the Commission takes note of document A/CN.10/L.63?

It was so decided.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the Commission takes note of the provisional programme of work, as contained in document A/CN.10/2010/CRP.1?

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to consider the election of the remaining members of the Bureau. As members will recall, the Commission has yet to elect two vice-chairmen, to be nominated by the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. I understand that the Group has still not been able to nominate candidates in that regard. I urge it to do so as soon as possible. I therefore suggest that we take up this issue at a later stage of our work.

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Commission and the members of the Bureau, allow me to warmly congratulate all those who have been elected to lead this session. I am certain that together we shall all contribute to the successful completion of the Commission's work. On a more personal note, I would like to say how much I count on their support and advice.

I should now like to make some general remarks on our programme of work.

As members certainly know, we have limited time in which to complete our tasks, but we need a clear programme of work and I am sure that, thanks to their ability, our two Working Group Chairmen will help us to fulfil our responsibilities in that regard. We have allocated 10 meetings for each Working Group, which should allow us to make substantial progress.

General exchange of views

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I regret that a column prevents us from seeing each other directly, but I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I listened very carefully to you with my full attention, as well as to the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; as well as Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this year's session, as well as the members of the Bureau. The European Union expresses its resolve to work closely with you in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome at this session.

The European Union recognizes the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral structure that allows in-depth debate on specific disarmament issues. The European Union welcomes the work carried out in the past year both by Working Group I, dealing with recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and by Working Group II, which is deliberating the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. We look forward to working closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Chairmen of both Working Groups in order to make progress in our deliberations.

We welcome the renewed momentum of the international arms control and disarmament agenda, and we wish to underscore the need for general disarmament. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, together with confidence, transparency and reciprocity, are vital aspects of collective security. The European Union wishes to take advantage of this renewed momentum to address the greatest challenges before us and to move forward on all such matters.

The European Union is firmly committed to strengthening the multilateral system. International organizations, treaties, conventions and other instruments should be at the core of our common efforts to address threats to international peace and security. We need to universalize and implement those instruments in order to ensure that all States meet their respective international obligations.

Strengthening the authority of the United Nations and the legally binding treaty regime should be a priority for all countries. The Security Council also has a crucial role in addressing situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. That role should be strengthened.

Bolstering the non-proliferation regime should be a major priority for all States in order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, which pose a serious potential threat to our common security. We are convinced that all States must take concerted and resolute action to ensure strict compliance with their non-proliferation obligations and to respond quickly and effectively to non-compliance. In that regard, the European Union welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of its important resolution 1887 (2009) at the summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament held on 24 September 2009.

The European Union continues to support the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) as it fulfils its renewed mandate. The Union also supports efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative. We should also like to reiterate our commitment to rigorous export controls, coordinated nationally and internationally.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is based on the three mutually reinforcing pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, is a unique and irreplaceable framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability. In the light of the current challenges in the field of international security, in particular the risk of proliferation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the European

Union is convinced that the NPT is more important than ever.

The proliferation risks posed by Iran in particular continue to be a matter of grave concern to us. The European Union deeply regrets that Iran has not provided the necessary cooperation or allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to confirm that all nuclear material and facilities in Iran are intended for peaceful activities. That amounts to non-fulfilment of its obligations, under article III of the NPT, to cooperate with the IAEA, as well as of its Safeguards Agreement with the Agency and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. The European Union reiterates its commitment to finding a comprehensive long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation. However, Iran's persistent failure to meet its international obligations and its apparent lack of interest in pursuing negotiations require a clear response, including the adoption of appropriate measures.

The European Union is actively working to ensure a successful outcome to next May's Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We would like to achieve a substantive and balanced outcome to the Conference that strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We must seize the opportunity of the upcoming Review Conference to move forward towards a safer world in which it is possible to meet all the objectives enshrined in the NPT, including disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The European Union has made a set of forward-looking proposals on all three NPT pillars with a view to incorporating them into a plan of action to be adopted by the Conference.

As security in Europe is linked to security in the Middle East, the European Union attaches particular importance to non-proliferation and disarmament issues in that region. The European Union considers the establishment in the Middle East of an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to be a good way to enhance security and stability in the region. The European Union recognizes the importance of the relevant resolutions on the Middle East adopted by the Security Council and by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and remains committed to their implementation. Practical steps should promote adherence to and compliance with a set of nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements, such as the NPT and the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Convention.

The European Union wishes to highlight the IAEA's unique and indispensable role in verifying State compliance with nuclear non-proliferation obligations. The European Union believes that the IAEA safeguards system is an essential basis for verification of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and that it is also crucial to the success of the multilateral system. The European Union reiterates its call for the universal conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols that form the current verification standard.

Europe's security benefits from the ongoing global disarmament efforts. We welcome the commitment made by Presidents Medvedev and Obama to negotiate and conclude a follow-up agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), as well as their renewed engagement on other strategic issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. We count on the early signing of the post-START agreement and hope that it will open the way towards new arms-control talks. We welcome the nuclear disarmament measures taken by the two European Union nuclear-weapon States, including their initiatives in that area. We call on the international community to work to promote the concrete and realistic disarmament initiatives endorsed by our 27 heads of State and Government, which we submitted to the General Assembly in 2008 with a view to this year's NPT Review Conference.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of critical importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The renewed political commitments to securing additional ratifications of the Treaty, in particular by some annex 2 States, and recent progress made in strengthening its verification regime have given new impetus to our efforts to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of that key Treaty. Until that happens, we urge all States to abide by a moratorium and to refrain from any actions that are contrary to the obligations and provisions of the Treaty.

The European Union welcomes the adoption by consensus in 2009 of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. In that connection, the

Union attaches great importance to the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 of 24 March 1995 and the mandate contained therein, as agreed in the decision adopted on 29 May 2009 by the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864). Pending the entry into force of such a fissile material cut-off treaty, we call on all States concerned to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of such material.

We note that a growing number of States are showing interest in developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with a view to addressing their long-term energy needs, as well as for other purposes. The European Union wishes to highlight the interest sparked by the International Conference on Access to Civil Nuclear Energy, held in Paris on 8 and 9 March. The European Union is committed to ensuring the responsible development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — in the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions — by countries that would like to develop their capacities in that field. We stress the key role played by the IAEA in that regard.

The European Union supports the development of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. We are convinced of the benefits of such approaches in providing nuclear fuel supply security for countries developing a nuclear programme in the best security and non-proliferation conditions. The European Union looks forward to achieving further progress in the ongoing initiatives in a consensual way. We encourage the steady development and implementation of proliferation resistance through applied research in this area.

The European Union contributes significantly to global nuclear security efforts. In that regard, we welcome the commitment of the United States to working intensively to secure all vulnerable fissile material and to hosting a nuclear security summit in Washington, D.C., on 12 and 13 April. The European Union is ready to contribute actively to the success of the summit.

The European Union is convinced that, in the 2009-2011 three-year cycle, the Disarmament Commission will devote due attention to the issue of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. We are mindful of the harmful and destabilizing effects of unregulated transfers of conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market, as well as of the humanitarian consequences of mines and cluster munitions. The European Union is strongly committed to improving the international and regional response to those threats. Thorough legislation in the area of transfers of conventional weapons is already in place and being implemented by the European Union's member States.

We strongly support the concept of an international arms trade treaty and are actively participating in and promoting the process leading towards its realization. The European Union welcomes the adoption in December by the General Assembly of resolution 64/48, which calls for the convening in 2012 of a United Nations conference on an arms trade treaty to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards on the transfer of conventional arms. The European Union is prepared to work actively towards that goal in the Preparatory Committee of the conference during 2010 and 2011.

The European Union is a major donor to mine action and supports and promotes the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and its universalization. The Union welcomes the outcome of the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, which took place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 29 November to 5 December. We especially welcome the document entitled "A shared commitment for a mine-free world: the 2009 Cartagena Declaration", which was adopted in support of the Convention and its goals. That document, along with the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014, will guide us in our fight against anti-personnel landmines and its effects during the next five years.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is an important step forward in resolving the humanitarian problems caused by that type of weapon, which is of major concern to all European Union member States. We welcome both the adoption of this new disarmament and humanitarian instrument and its entry into force on 1 August 2010, as well as the timely holding of the first Meeting of States Parties, which will take place in Vientiane, Laos, in November. The

adoption of a meaningful protocol on this type of munition in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), with the participation of major military Powers, would represent another important step forward.

The European Union is firmly committed to preserving and developing the CCW, which is an essential part of international humanitarian law. As several high contracting parties are not yet in a position to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the European Union is convinced that concluding a complementary agreement in the framework of the CCW that is compatible with the Convention on Cluster Munitions would contribute significantly to addressing the humanitarian impact of that type of weapon.

We are also strongly committed to eradicating the excessive accumulation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The European Union would like to reduce the unregulated availability of those arms and their ammunition in areas of conflict or potential conflict. To that end, the European Union has adopted a set of specific instruments that are enshrined in the Union's Strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was adopted by the European Council in 2005. Through the provision of assistance to third countries, dialogue with our partners and support to the relevant international instruments, the EU remains committed to the implementation of the Strategy.

The European Union fully supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and advocates the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The European Union continues to support regional and national implementation of those instruments through specific projects. The Union will continue to combat threats posed by activities related to the illicit spread of those arms, and will take an active part in the work of the fourth Biennial Meeting of States, which will take place in New York in June.

Transparency in the field of conventional weapons through the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms and information on small arms and light weapons continues to be a key component in combating the uncontrolled proliferation of such weapons, thereby fostering an atmosphere of trust and security. Such an environment would also be enhanced by increased transparency in military expenditures. The European Union underscores the importance of broader participation in both instruments.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we wish you every success in your endeavours and assure you of the full support of the States members of the European Union in this process.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I would like to first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairperson of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this year's important session. We are confident that, under your able stewardship, this session will yield tangible outcomes that fulfil the critical mandate entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly. NAM also extends its congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, as well as to the Chairs of the Working Groups on their elections.

The Movement welcomes the remarks of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We very much value his work to support and facilitate the aims of the Disarmament Commission.

NAM underscores the importance of all United Nations Member States abiding by their commitment to the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to the established norms of international law.

NAM would also like to reiterate its principled positions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as contained in the outcomes and documents of the various NAM summits and ministerial meetings. We underscore that concrete progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all their aspects is necessary to strengthening international peace and security.

It is regrettable that there has been a regression on the multilaterally-agreed agenda of nuclear disarmament in the past few years. With regard to some developments in the past year, especially the forward-looking pledges of some nuclear weapon States to advance on their disarmament commitments, the Group looks forward to seeing those statements being transformed into concrete actions.

The Group takes note of the summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament convened by the Security Council in September last year. NAM has always believed that there should be a balanced approach to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Our position on the subject was communicated to the Council. We look for further progress on the disarmament agenda, particularly from the nuclear-weapon States. The efforts of the United States and Russian Federation to conclude a post-START agreement are noted. Nevertheless, we need to go all the way, in accordance with our agreed multilateral commitments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in a transparent and internationally verifiable manner. It is high time that the vision of a world without nuclear weapons, which NAM has long articulated and been in the forefront of, be realized fully and completely.

The Movement is optimistic that the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation will be fulfilled sooner rather than later, and in this context sees the Disarmament Commission playing a very vital role. We see the deliberative function of the Commission becoming more important in these times of greater international good will to facilitate a rapid movement on achieving disarmament goals.

A lot of work will be needed at the Commission, but it can be very effective, as seen at its numerous productive sessions, including in 1999 when it was able to reach consensus on guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free-zones and for conventional arms control. The work of the Disarmament Commission has contributed significantly to the emergence of universally accepted principles on disarmament, and we hope that the work in that respect will be intensified by the requisite political will of all States.

The NAM remains firmly committed to the Commission's basic purposes and principles, and reaffirms the centrality of the Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, providing in-depth deliberation on specific disarmament issues and submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Movement appeals to all States to pursue and intensify multilateral negotiations, in line with the consensus of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), with the clear objective of accomplishing nuclear disarmament. As agreed, such negotiations must take place under effective international controls.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority. We emphasize the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention. It reaffirms the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

NAM again calls for an international conference at the earliest possible date with the aim of realizing an agreement on a phased programme for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons with a specific timeline, as well as to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction.

All members of the Commission should fulfil their disarmament obligations and prevent nuclear proliferation in all its aspects. In the efforts towards the objective of nuclear disarmament, international and regional approaches and confidence-building measures complement each other and should, wherever possible, be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security.

The international community's efforts on non-proliferation should be made in conjunction with concrete efforts towards nuclear disarmament. The Movement also believes that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is the total elimination of these weapons. We further underline that the threat posed by terrorists' acquiring weapons of mass destruction should be addressed within the framework of the United Nations and with international cooperation, consistent with the

purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Pending the total eradication of nuclear weapons, there should be vigorous efforts towards a multilaterally-negotiated and legally-binding instrument that is universal and unconditional, to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

NAM stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, inter alia, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. It reiterates that if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all State signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to nuclear disarmament will be essential.

With regard to the agenda item "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade", the first-generation disarmament decade in the 1960s set an ambitious agenda for the cessation of the super-Powers' arms race, nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. These nuclear goals were not realized in that decade or in the following, but the 1978 special session on disarmament concluded a Final Document strategy for general and complete disarmament under effective international control, with the fundamental desire to eliminate the danger of nuclear war and to implement measures to halt and reverse the arms race. The Final Document of the special session remains the only consensus document of universal acceptance in the field of disarmament.

In the 1980s, the Second Disarmament Decade was launched and sought to not only halt or reverse the arms race, but also to conclude agreements on the arms race according to the objectives of the 1978 Final Document to strengthen international peace and security, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, and to reallocate resources from military to development uses, in the understanding that peace and development are indivisible.

The 1990s witnessed the declaration of the Third Disarmament Decade, in which confidence-building measures, dialogue and negotiations were leveraged to their full extent, noting the profound relationship between disarmament, social and economic development, and environmental protection. The Decade pursued the goal of reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons and a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, and of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as an inalienable right of States, under agreed international safeguards.

We are now entering the fourth disarmament decade, 2010-2020, in which we seek to build upon the goals and progress of the previous Decades and to leverage our ability to make progress on initiatives already begun at this critical juncture and diplomatic opening. In this regard, NAM believes that the elements of a draft declaration for the fourth disarmament decade should reflect not only its priority of nuclear disarmament but also relevant issues in the field of disarmament, including the issue of small arms and light weapons.

In closing, NAM wishes to stress that multilateral cooperation and greater political will are imperative to pursuing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation in a meaningful manner. We must all learn from the past, rise above our differences and work together to make the best use of recent and emerging international good will. The present and future generations require our most sincere and vigorous efforts to establish a world that is safe, secure and prosperous for all. NAM reiterates its readiness and support in working with you, Sir, and the Bureau for a successful session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group.

At the outset, the Rio Group wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2010 substantive session. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. Likewise, we thank the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II, Mr. Paolo Cuculi of Italy and Mr. Johann Paschalis of South Africa, for their ongoing efforts to bring their mandates to a satisfactory conclusion, and we look forward to a successful outcome of the current three-year cycle.

We welcome the participation of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, whose message reaffirms the strong commitment of the United Nations to the disarmament agenda.

The Rio Group reiterates its resolve to work constructively to complete the complex tasks entrusted to the Commission. We hope that this session will achieve substantive progress that will enable us to develop specific recommendations on agreed agenda items.

With regard to the topic "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", the Group reiterates its firm position in favour of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as its concern about the serious threat to humankind represented by the very existence of nuclear weapons and the slow progress towards their total elimination, which is the only absolute guarantee against the threat or use of such weapons.

The Rio Group, while welcoming some positive signals on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, emphasizes the need for urgent and consistent action aimed at the total elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons. In this context, we look forward to the signing of a legally binding agreement between the two major nuclear-weapon States to replace the START I Treaty, which should lead to new and verifiable reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

The States members of the Rio Group, as part of the first densely populated area declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Tlatelolco about 40 years ago, welcome the convening of the Second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia to consider ways and means to enhance consultations among States parties and signatories, treaty agencies and other interested States, with the aim of promoting coordination and convergence in the implementation of the provisions of these treaties and in strengthening the regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Rio Group welcomes the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty — the Pelindaba Treaty — which represents an important step towards attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are convinced that nuclear-weapon-free zones represent an important contribution to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Rio Group reaffirms the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and the balance of its three pillars. We are fully committed to its universality and we therefore urge States that have not yet done to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also call on all States parties to the NPT to comply fully with all their obligations and to fulfil their commitments under the Treaty. We affirm the importance of not interpreting or implementing these obligations and commitments on a selective basis.

We urge nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the Treaty and to show leadership in complying with the commitments set forth therein, in particular the practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We call on nuclear-weapon States to accelerate measures in this regard.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of States to research, produce and make peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the NPT. We also reaffirm that all parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate and have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Rio Group remains committed to a successful outcome of the forthcoming 2010 NPT Review Conference, which we see as an opportunity to build upon commitments and undertakings made at previous review conferences, leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world. We urge all States to spare no effort to ensure a substantive outcome that will strengthen the regime. We stress the importance of taking concrete action at the Review Conference aimed to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

The Rio Group regrets that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to adopt its programme of work, despite the positive developments that took place in that forum in 2009. We call on all members of the Conference to support and encourage the early beginning of its substantive work on the core issues of its agenda.

In this regard, the Rio Group urges the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with the aim of initiating negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a

specified time frame, including a convention on nuclear weapons. In this context, we welcome the Secretary-General's five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament and his support for the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention backed by a strong verification system.

Our Group reiterates its call for the immediate negotiation of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. Until such a treaty exists, nuclear-weapon States must respect existing commitments regarding security assurances. We also stress the relevance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we reaffirm the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the Court that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The Rio Group expresses its concern regarding the possibility of an arms race in outer space. On the basis of that concern, we urge the Conference on Disarmament to begin the negotiation of a legally binding international agreement to prevent such a race. We also call upon this forum to start negotiations on a non-discriminatory multilateral treaty that includes an international verification regime on the prohibition of fissile materials pursuant to the Shannon Mandate.

We reiterate our position in favour of the complete cessation of nuclear testing. We stress the importance of maintaining a moratorium on all testing of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices until the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force. In this context, we welcome recent statements regarding the ratification by States listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We look forward to these statements being translated into deeds and urge other States, especially those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty as a matter of priority.

Regarding the topic "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade", the Group believes that the fourth decade would play a significant and positive role in mobilizing global efforts to respond to the current and emerging challenges in the field of disarmament, arms control, proliferation and international security.

Regarding the third agenda item, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", the Group will limit itself to making some brief preliminary remarks on this occasion. Since this important topic will likely be addressed at the next session of the Commission, we will have the opportunity to address it in a much broader and more detailed way at that time, when we will also address issues of particular interest to the region.

Our region has taken significant steps towards the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Such measures contribute to the improvement of international peace and security since they are intended to promote understanding, transparency and cooperation among States. We therefore believe it necessary to strengthen, improve and extend confidence-building measures at all levels.

In this regard, it is worth recalling General Assembly resolutions 59/92, 60/82, 61/79 and 63/57, which were adopted by consensus. One of their objectives is to strengthen the exchange of information on confidence-building in the field of conventional arms. The information voluntarily provided by States is recorded in an electronic database created for this purpose in the Office for Disarmaments Affairs, which facilitates periodic consideration of progress in the design and implementation of confidence-building measures, acting as a tool for additional transparency in the United Nations.

The Rio Group welcomes the regional meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Regional Workshop on Transparency in Armaments for Latin American and Caribbean States, which took place in Lima, Peru, between 1 and 4 March, 2010.

The Rio Group reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau in seeking to achieve concrete results during this session. We call on all delegations to show the necessary resolve to achieve successful results.

Mr. Obisakin (Nigeria) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

(*spoke in English*)

The African Group wishes to congratulate you, an illustrious son of Africa, on your election as the Chair

of this deliberative body on disarmament. We believe that your experience, coupled with an untiring quest for a consensus agenda, shall be of immense value to our deliberations. We also congratulate all the members of the Bureau.

The African Group underscores the unique and important position of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the main deliberative body on disarmament in multilateral diplomacy, but regrets its failure to reach consensus on any substantive issue during its last substantive session in 2009. The African Group is calling on all States Members of the United Nations to demonstrate sufficient political goodwill, requisite flexibility and deep understanding in order to achieve concrete recommendations on the issues on the agenda of the Commission.

While the African Group aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the representative of Indonesia, we would like to emphasize the following several points.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, nuclear weapons still represent the greatest threat to humanity, and therefore the African Group calls for the total, universal, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons as provided for by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Multilateral diplomatic negotiation, consistent with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, within the United Nations disarmament machinery remains the most effective approach for achieving credible universal nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in order to safeguard and strengthen international peace and security.

All nuclear-weapon States should implement in good faith all their obligations and commitments under the NPT and other internationally agreed instruments; desist from developing new types of nuclear weapons; and grant, unconditionally, negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States in the spirit and to the letter of the NPT, and within a legally binding framework.

While we note the various bilateral and unilateral efforts in the field of disarmament, we believe that multilateral negotiations, especially within the United Nations framework, will be most effective in matters of disarmament and international peace and security.

The African Group is convinced that an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to enforce a comprehensive ban on all forms of nuclear test explosions would be a concrete and meaningful step in the realization of a systematic process to achieve nuclear disarmament. It stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, including by all nuclear-weapon States, which would contribute to the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

The African Group welcomes the entry into force of some regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, including the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which came into force on 15 July, 2009, with its ratification by 28 member States. The African Group calls on nuclear-weapon States in particular and other relevant States that have not done so to ratify the Treaty's protocols without further delay in order to ensure its effectiveness.

In this connection, Africa reiterates its support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions on this matter and in order to realize the goals and objectives of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. To this end, the African Group calls on all United Nations Member States in the Middle East and all the nuclear-weapon States to support the urgent establishment of the zone.

With regard to conventional weapons, the African Group notes the initial process of an arms trade treaty scheduled for July 2010. Having perhaps one of the highest number of victims of the illegal trade, circulation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, Africa will constructively engage in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Conference. In the view of African States, a feasible and potentially universal arms trade treaty could be an instrument constituting an efficient tool to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. It should be universal, objective and non-discriminatory and contain a clear requirement that all transfers of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, be expressly authorized by the competent Government authorities of exporting and importing States alike, as well as a clear prohibition of transfers

to non-State actors. It should thus bridge the gaps that could be exploited for arms trading in illicit markets.

With regard to the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, the African Group wishes to support an agenda that would, inter alia, recognize the need to strengthen efforts to advance the goal of general and complete disarmament based on the principle of verifiability, transparency and irreversibility; stress the importance of the goals and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention; commence negotiations on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; seek enhanced levels of transparency in armaments and military expenditures based on the principle of undiminished security for all; promote cooperation, assistance and capacity-building to Member States and regions or subregions in order to contribute to the above-mentioned objectives; recognize that civil society, the academic community and non-governmental organizations can play a significant role in raising awareness and providing impetus for progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation; and stress the importance of the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development, and strive to ensure the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter, encouraging the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and making reference to the contribution that disarmament could provide in meeting them.

The African Group wishes to appeal to all Member States to expedite action on the draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade with a view to concluding the preparatory works during this session. Finally, the African Group appeals to all members of the Disarmament Commission to show flexibility by looking beyond their narrow national or regional interests with a view to attaining consensus on a larger picture of lasting international peace and security.

Mr. Kang Yong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this session. I am convinced that, with your diplomatic experience and skill, you will lead this session to a fruitful outcome. The Chinese delegation offers its full cooperation to you and to other delegations. I also take this opportunity to express appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Towpik of Poland, for his outstanding work. I would also like to express my appreciation for the presence and statement by Mr. Duarte.

Today, the interdependence of countries in the security field is growing increasingly deep, exchanges and cooperation among countries have been strengthened, and the concept of security for all has become increasingly acceptable. At the same time, the international community continues to face growing security challenges. Regional conflicts and hotspot issues keep emerging. Terrorism runs rampant. There is still a long way to go in multilateral arms control and non-proliferation.

China maintains that, in order to further push forward the multilateral arms control and non-proliferation process in a fair and effective way, the international community should embrace a new security concept characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination; fully respect and accommodate the legitimate security concerns of countries; establish inter-State relations of mutual understanding and mutual trust; adhere to multilateralism; consolidate the collective security system with the United Nations at its core; and attain the goal of security for all through mutually beneficial means.

The complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons to achieve a world free of such weapons bears on the well-being of all mankind and is the common aspiration of peace-loving people of all countries. The international community now has a good opportunity to promote the international nuclear disarmament process and should make joint efforts to take the following practical measures.

First, nuclear-weapon States should fulfil in good faith their nuclear disarmament obligations as contained in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and publicly undertake not to seek permanent possession of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the global strategic

balance and stability should be maintained. As countries with the largest nuclear arsenals, the United States and the Russian Federation should continue to take the lead in making drastic and substantive reductions in their nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible manner. In this regard, we welcome the conclusion of negotiations between the United States and the Russia Federation on a new bilateral agreement on the reduction of strategic weapons.

Secondly, nuclear-weapon States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security strategies and abandon the doctrine of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons, so as to reduce nuclear threats in a practical manner. All nuclear-weapon States should openly undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and should conclude a legally binding international instrument in that regard. In the meantime, nuclear-weapon States should negotiate and conclude a treaty on the non-first use of nuclear weapons against one another.

Thirdly, the international community should make joint efforts to advance the multilateral nuclear disarmament process. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be brought into force at an early date, and negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should be started within the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva as soon as possible. The efforts of countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of consultations among themselves and voluntary agreements must be respected and supported.

Fourthly, in order to attain the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament under legitimate international supervision, at an appropriate time the international community should develop a viable long-term plan composed of phased actions, including the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing and complement each other. It is extremely important to effectively promote international nuclear non-proliferation efforts and to eliminate the risks of nuclear proliferation in order to achieve the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and to maintain international and regional peace and stability.

In that regard, the international community should direct its efforts towards the following aspects. First, it should promote a peaceful and stable international environment with security for all, respect each other's security interests and enhance mutual trust so as to remove the root causes for maintaining or seeking nuclear weapons.

Secondly, it should persevere in resolving non-proliferation hot-spot issues through dialogue and negotiation. The parties concerned should fully utilize political wisdom and jointly seek proper solutions to the issues. Sanctions and pressure can hardly resolve the issue.

Thirdly, impartial and non-discriminatory international efforts with regard to nuclear non-proliferation should be ensured, and a balance struck between non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The legitimate right of each State to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be respected and guaranteed, and the practice of double standards should be firmly abandoned.

Fourthly, the international nuclear non-proliferation legal regime should be strengthened and enhanced. The universality, authority and effectiveness of the NPT should be further promoted, the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards capacity should be strengthened, and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) should be fully implemented.

Fifthly, the international community should strive to enhance global nuclear security. Credible and effective measures should be taken to ensure the security of nuclear facilities and materials and to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials. Furthermore, all countries should strengthen their cooperation in combating against nuclear terrorism.

The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT is of great significance. All parties should seize that opportunity and strive to promote the NPT's three major objectives of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a comprehensive and balanced way so that the Review Conference produces substantive outcomes.

China has always supported the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and adheres firmly to a nuclear strategy of self-defence. We have faithfully respected our commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons

at any time or in any circumstances and unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. In fact, China is the only nuclear-weapon State to have made such a commitment. China has always exercised the utmost restraint in the development of nuclear weapons. We have never participated in any form of nuclear arms race and have never deployed such weapons on foreign soil. That in itself is our unique contribution to nuclear disarmament.

China has always supported and actively participated in international non-proliferation efforts. We have strictly fulfilled our obligations on international non-proliferation and established a comprehensive system of laws and regulations on export controls that are essentially identical to international practices. China calls for the peaceful resolution of the Korean peninsula and Iranian nuclear issues through dialogue and negotiations, and has made tireless efforts towards that goal. We are ready to work with the other relevant parties to actively promote the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the appropriate settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue, with a view to safeguarding the international non-proliferation regime and to maintaining regional peace and stability.

Declaring the 2010s the fourth disarmament decade would be of great significance in promoting international arms control and the non-proliferation process. At the previous session of the Disarmament Commission, various parties undertook helpful discussions on the elements of a draft declaration of the fourth disarmament decade and reached substantial common understanding. We hope that all parties will intensify their efforts, respect and accommodate each other's concerns, work together and try to reach agreement on the elements of a draft declaration at an early date.

China is of the view that the declaration of the fourth disarmament decade should be in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the guiding principles enshrined in the Final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2). Based on the new characteristics of the current international security situation, the declaration should specify the main tasks and priorities of international arms control and non-proliferation for the next decade. The content of the declaration should be comprehensive and balanced so as to gain the universal support of all parties.

The Disarmament Commission is the sole deliberative body on multilateral disarmament. In the new circumstances, strengthening the Commission's work will play a positive role in advancing multilateral arms control and non-proliferation. China is willing to make joint efforts with all other parties to promote the work of this session of the Disarmament Commission with a view contributing to the fair, reasonable and healthy development of the international arms control and non-proliferation process.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2010 substantive session. You and the other members of the Bureau may be assured of my delegation's support in discharging your duties.

I also take this opportunity to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, for his opening remarks and for his continued support to Member States in their endeavours in the field of disarmament.

Brazil fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

The Commission has an important role within the United Nations disarmament machinery. Since its creation, it has produced several useful guidelines and principles that shed light on the difficult issues presented by the disarmament negotiations. As a deliberative body with universal participation, dedicated to the long-term discussion of disarmament issues, it operates under the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and thus should be able to adopt recommendations that respond to the mandate given to it. One could argue that the absence of results in the Commission's work is more serious than the lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament, which is meant to negotiate legally binding agreements and has to abide by the consensus rule. It is therefore up to all of us to work towards achieving concrete outcomes in the Commission's deliberations, in accordance with the request contained in General Assembly resolution 64/65.

We are in the middle of the three-year cycle of the work of the Disarmament Commission. One of the working groups of the Commission will debate nuclear disarmament. It will do so under high expectations, based on the renewed momentum and promising statements by authorities from the nuclear-weapon States. Nonetheless, speeches have to be translated into concrete actions. Until now, 40 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the nuclear-weapon States have not been able to comply with their side of the bargain. Their arsenals still have the potential for overkill. Huge amounts of money continue to flow to programmes designed to improve, modernize and miniaturize nuclear warheads. The military doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States continue to include the use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear-weapon States.

During the course of this year, many opportunities will arise for nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate that they are serious about their commitments under the NPT. The signing of the new agreement to replace the START I Treaty will be an important step. A successful outcome to the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT is crucial for the strengthening of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and will signal to the international community that the States parties, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, are committed to a world free of nuclear weapons. Brazil is encouraged by the possibility of the conclusion of the necessary ratification processes of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, leading to its entry into force.

Another indispensable step in the direction of nuclear disarmament would be the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. It is important that the Disarmament Commission support such measures. It should do so by striving to find language that can enjoy the broadest possible support.

Working Group II of the Disarmament Commission will work on elements of a declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. In order to fulfil that mandate, the Commission should not only take stock of the commitments made by Member States in the previous decades, but also consider the challenges ahead. From Brazil's perspective, the declaration should reflect the priority that we all attach to nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons must be a clear and unconditional goal. The declaration should also address relevant issues in the field of conventional weapons, such as the arms trade treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

According to resolution 64/65, after the conclusion of the declaration, the United Nations Disarmament Commission should consider the issue of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. It is important to highlight that such measures aim to alter inaccurate perceptions and to avoid misunderstandings over military actions and policies that might otherwise lead to conflict. They can gradually foster stable political and diplomatic relations and transform parties' ideas about their security needs. They can even encourage initiatives to identify shared security interests in a manner conducive to a better appreciation of the importance of effective disarmament.

In concluding, I wish to assure you, Sir, of the readiness of my delegation to work with you and with the other members of the Bureau for a successful outcome of this session.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to extend to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of the Algerian delegation on your election to chair the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of our active support. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I welcome the presence this morning of Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and to thank him for his statement.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

This session of the Disarmament Commission is of particular importance as it will determine the outcome of this cycle. It is indeed time to infuse our deliberations with the necessary momentum and to show a spirit of cooperation in order to send a positive message one month before the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for which our countries have the highest hopes.

First, with respect to Working Group I on nuclear disarmament, my delegation reiterates the importance that it attaches to adopting the necessary recommendations at the end of this cycle and reaffirms the need to adopt a transparent, inclusive and broad approach in the work of that Group.

Algeria reiterates its position of principle on the ultimate goal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The effective and ongoing commitment of the entire international community, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, is essential to achieving that objective, in accordance with article VI of the NPT and the commitments entered into by such States at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences, including the 13 practical steps agreed by consensus in 2000.

Disarmament measures should be carried out in accordance with the principles of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility. In that regard, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to welcome the positive outcome of the negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. That agreement represents undeniable progress on nuclear disarmament and sends a positive sign to the entire international community.

Moreover, my delegation believes that only a balanced approach that ensures the effective and ongoing implementation of the three pillars of the NPT, which are mutually supporting and reinforcing, will promote that instrument and strengthen it.

Through the adoption of concrete recommendations, the Commission should chart a course that will ultimately lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To that end, all Members, in particular nuclear-weapon States, must show real political will. The adoption of intermediary measures would certainly help to build confidence and to create the conditions necessary to achieving the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament.

In that respect, it is important that the nuclear Powers limit the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines and that they fully renounce, within a reasonable time frame, postures based on deterrence and eliminate any role for nuclear weapons in security policies. Accordingly, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of an internationally verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile materials are a priority.

As President of the Conference on Disarmament, in May 2009 Algeria promoted the adoption of a programme of work after a 12-year impasse. Today, it is up to the entire international community to strive for the implementation of that programme by the Conference, taking into account the concerns expressed by all Member States.

Concluding a legally binding international instrument whereby nuclear-weapon States would grant security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States remains of the highest priority.

Finally, in the run-up to the NPT Review Conference, giving concrete expression to the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be likely to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament and to preserve peace and stability in this troubled region.

Turning now to the Working Group on the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, we wish to reaffirm the need for everyone to step up their efforts to reach an agreement on elements to propose to the General Assembly before the next session. The 2010-2020 disarmament decade should enjoy special attention, given the current momentum that we are now seeing in disarmament work. In 2009, discussions among member States in the Working Group highlighted the general interest in this issue, while sending a mixed message about the possibility of reaching an agreement during this cycle, and particularly during this session.

My delegation believes that the draft declaration should contain, in particular, the following elements. It should reaffirm the need to achieve the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons; reflect the principles of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility that should guide and characterize nuclear disarmament measures; reaffirm the central role of the United Nations as the universal multilateral framework for considering disarmament issues; reaffirm the particularly negative consequences of the arms race and the extensive resources that it squanders, which could be dedicated to development and to combating

poverty, disease and climate change; highlight the importance of adopting universally agreed norms in the area of conventional weapons; and reiterate the commitment of the international community to preventing and combating the illicit trade in small arms and its disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate my delegation's determination to work with all delegations to ensure the success of this session of the Disarmament Commission. Concrete progress towards disarmament would enable us to significantly reduce the causes of tension in the international arena and to free up precious energy and resources in order to meet the legitimate hopes for development and well-being of all of humankind.

Ms. Wong (United States of America): It is a great pleasure, Sir, to see you in the Chair, and the United States delegation congratulates you and wishes you all the best for a successful session. We also wish to assure you, the other members of the Bureau and the heads of the two Working Groups of the fullest cooperation of the United States delegation throughout this session.

This meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission takes place at a key juncture in the history of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The United States and Russia have just concluded an historic agreement to reduce their nuclear arsenals to the lowest levels in decades. The nuclear security summit will meet in Washington during our deliberations, and just two short weeks after we finish this meeting, the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will meet here in New York. What we do during this session of the Commission can help set the stage for fruitful and productive meetings, and especially for a successful Review Conference.

This year, the Commission has two items on its agenda and will consider a third, once it has concluded consideration of one of those two. First, there is the agenda item on the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as a fourth disarmament decade. States Members of the United Nations have sponsored this decade as a way to focus the attention of the world on disarmament. The United States is prepared to participate constructively and actively in consideration of a declaration to mark the decade. In that light, the United States delegation played an active role in last year's discussion of this issue by the Working Group. The text issued by the Chair, Mr. Paschalis of South Africa, at the end of the session is a good one. With some small amendments, our delegation could agree to it rapidly.

We hope that all delegations here can work towards a declaration that can gain consensus approval. If all member delegations take a realistic approach, the Working Group should be able to conclude its work quickly, and the Commission could move on to the item on its agenda relating to conventional confidence-building measures.

As for as the other item on our agenda, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", the United States delegation understands that this year will be devoted to an in-depth review of the issue. We consider that to be a good idea. We believe that the most useful thing the Commission can accomplish in this area is not a paper on which it can only reach consensus by restating familiar positions. Rather, it is a realistic consideration of the measures necessary to achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the obstacles to such achievements and how to overcome such obstacles. If the discussion enables delegations to agree on a paper reflecting their views, so much the better. But the United States will be satisfied with a thorough review of the issues involved that avoids the usual reiterations of standard positions. We count on the chairmanship of our colleague, Mr. Cuculi of Italy, to lead us in this direction.

President Obama has committed the United States to taking concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons — the goal envisioned under article VI of the NPT. The conclusion of a new START Treaty is a very significant step on that path. The Treaty will result in meaningful United States and Russian Federation reductions in deployed strategic warheads and in their delivery vehicles. Once the Treaty is signed, we will work with the United States Senate to pave the way for its ratification and entry into force.

We also know that the possibility that terrorists may acquire a nuclear weapon is among the most extreme threats to global security. To address this urgent threat, the United States will seek support from others at the nuclear security summit next month to implement President Obama's proposal for a new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear

materials around the world. Our Government seeks thereby to elevate this issue on the international agenda and to set new guidelines, expand international cooperation and pursue new partnerships to lock down these sensitive materials.

Finally, in early May the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will meet here to review the workings of the Treaty. We hope that the Review Conference will reaffirm the commitment of the parties to the Treaty and take a balanced and forward-looking approach to strengthening each of its pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In the same vein, our delegation wishes to emphasize that when the Conference on Disarmament reconvenes in Geneva at the end of May, we will continue to exert all our efforts to reach agreement on a programme of work that includes negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty — the widely agreed next step on the road towards nuclear disarmament.

Ending the testing of nuclear weapons once and for all has been an objective of the international community for many decades. President Obama has committed his Administration to working with the United States Senate to secure its advice and consent to the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Senate advice and consent are not a given, and the Administration will have to make the case for ratification. We are approaching this objective purposefully, but judiciously, to ensure a successful outcome. Unequivocal public statements, especially by the annex 2 States which continue to work towards ratification, will be helpful in this regard.

These are all important steps, and the United States urges all Member States concerned to work for their success.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Cuba, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission. Of course, we extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Cuba fully supports the statements made by the delegations of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group.

Despite the deep economic crisis affecting the world and, most severely, the developing countries, global military expenditures, instead of decreasing, continue to increase at an accelerating pace each year. The record figure of $1.464 trillion has already been reached. Just one country is responsible for almost half of the world's military spending, while the number of hungry people has reached an unprecedented level of 1.020 billion — one sixth of the world's population. Rather than decreasing, weapons manufacturing continues to grow. While tens of millions of human beings — victims of poverty and preventable and curable diseases — die in silence, modern wars of conquest continue to erupt, leaving thousands of dead, generally civilians, who are astonishingly called "collateral damage". While billions of dollars continue to be invested to modernize nuclear weapons, little progress is being made in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. It is already clear that over 100 countries will not be able to meet the goals because they do not have the necessary financial resources.

It is time to leave rhetoric aside and to honour the forgotten promises. Cuba reiterates its proposal to devote at least half of current military spending to meeting economic and social development needs through a fund managed by the United Nations.

For too many years, the Disarmament Commission has failed to reach concrete goals. It is in our hands to change this unacceptable situation. Today, we see some positive signs in the area of disarmament and arms control. These are few and completely insufficient, but they can be the beginning of a new era of achievement based on true multilateralism.

Cuba attaches particular importance to the item entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", which will be considered again by the Commission this year. Despite the end of the cold war, 23,300 nuclear weapons remain in the world, almost half of which are ready to be deployed immediately. The very existence of such weapons and the doctrines that prescribe their possession and use is a serious threat to international peace and security. Cuba therefore reaffirms its full support for the historic position of the Non-Aligned Movement that nuclear disarmament is and must remain the highest disarmament priority.

The relevance of nuclear disarmament cannot be ignored or minimized. Nuclear-weapon States have the legal obligation not only to enter into, but also to conclude negotiations aimed at achieving full nuclear

disarmament under a strict and effective system of international verification. Cuba emphatically rejects the selective application of the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The obligations of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be sidelined in the framework of the Treaty. It is essential that the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT to be held in May — inter alia, to adopt an action plan — guarantee the full elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons by 2025, at the very latest.

Cuba believes that the declaration of a fourth disarmament decade will have an important role in mobilizing international efforts to respond to current and emerging challenges in the areas of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and international security. We trust that the Disarmament Commission will be able to recommend this year to the General Assembly the draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, which should appropriately reflect the priorities that we have agreed upon in this area.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the full support of the Cuban delegation to you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairs of the Working Groups in the fulfilment of their tasks.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): Let me draw the attention of members to the 6 p.m. deadline today for inscription on the list of speakers.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.30 p.m.